

HOLY TRINITY



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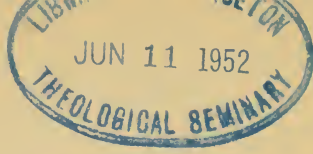


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HOLY TRINITY

BY
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THE HOLY TRINITY.

I. PRELIMINARY.

LORD BACON (died 1626 A. D.), the founder of modern philosophy, the father of the modern method in the search for truth, has taught the world first to gain as full possession as possible of the facts in any given field, and then to examine into the relations of those facts and discover, if possible, the principles underlying them, and then proceed to draw conclusions, and to arrange the whole into an orderly system. This is called the inductive method in the study of natural science.

In the study of biblical truth the same method should be pursued. The effort should be to ascertain what are the statements of the Scriptures on a given subject, and on kindred subjects, discover their relations, the principles which underlie them, and, when possible, bring them into an

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orderly arrangement. Says Dr. Harris: "We must begin with the elements of these doctrines not reduced to formulas and system. . . . Then as rational beings we should trace them back as far as we can into the heart and mind of God, and thus ascertain all that God in them has revealed himself to be in himself and in his relation to man."

Thus we shall seek first to find the elements of biblical teaching with respect to the being of God, and this in the way in which God historically revealed himself. In a brief treatise like the present, this cannot, of course, be exhaustively done. Such a study, however, reveals that the order of facts or elements respecting God revealed in the Bible was, first, the fact that there is but one God, or

II. THE DIVINE UNITY.

First and fundamental is the teaching that there is but one God. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). "Know therefore this day, and lay it to thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon earth beneath; there is none else" (Deut. 4:39). "There is no god with me: I kill, and I make

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alive; I wound, and I heal" (Deut. 32: 39). "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God, . . . ye are my witnesses. Is there a God beside me?" (Isa. 44: 6-8.) "For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone" (Ps. 86: 10). "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a saviour . . . for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45: 21, 22). In the New Testament, we have like teaching: "There is no God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him" (I. Cor. 8: 4-6). "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. 4: 6). "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well" (James 2: 19). "Unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever" (I. Tim. 1: 17). "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God" (John 17: 3). These and other scriptures teach most emphatically that there is but one God, in opposi-

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tion to the doctrine of polytheism, which is the belief of so large a part of the human race. It is opposed to the doctrine of tritheism; that is, that there are three gods, as those holding to the doctrine of the Trinity are sometimes falsely charged with teaching.

This doctrine of the divine unity is to be manifestly understood as implying not only the "*onliness*" of God, but also the "*oneness*" of God; that is, that God is numerically and indivisibly one in his substance, just as man's soul or mind is, in its essential being, one and indivisible. The Bible nowhere hints at multiplicity or division of the divine substance. It needs to be clearly understood that the Christian church has always understood the teaching of the Bible to be the unity of God in such a sense that she could not be justly charged with holding to the possible divisibility of the divine essence.

III. GOD IN THE FATHER.

The divinity of the Father has been universally held. "And David said, Blessed be thou, O Lord, the God of Israel, our father, for ever and ever" (I. Chr. 29:10). "But now, O Lord, thou art

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our father" (Isa. 64:8). "Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hos. 1:10). "That ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:45). "At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matt. 11:25). "And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work. For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:17, 18). These are only a few of very numerous passages in which God is spoken of as Father.

IV. GOD IN THE SON.

Jesus Christ is often spoken of in the Scriptures as, in a unique sense, the Son of God; indeed, in such a sense as to make him equal with the Father in all the essential elements of his being. That is, as Dr. Harris puts it: "God in

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Christ. The being who in Christ was manifested in the flesh is God."

1. His existence before he appeared in the world implies his divinity. He said, "I am come down from heaven" (John 6:38). "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). "No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven" (John 3:13). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). In this expression, the Jews understood the speaker to claim equality with God, for they took up stones to stone him, charging him with having spoken blasphemy. If their inference were incorrect, as an honest man, and especially as one in the rôle of their teacher, he should have corrected them, but he only escaped out of their presence, leaving them under the impression of his claim to divinity. When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, he announced himself as "I AM THAT I AM." God said to Moses, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." "History shows that Jesus was intimately acquainted with the Old Tes-

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tament, and deeply imbued with its reverence for God, yet he here appropriates to himself the sublime name, 'I AM,' by which Jehovah revealed himself to Moses. In this state preceding his earthly life he existed in glory with the Father" (Dr. Harris). In Colossians 1:17, we read, "He is before all things." The immediate context speaks of him as the creator of all things, so that these words, "He is before all things," place him out of the class of things created; that is, he is uncreated, therefore eternal, and if eternal, then divine. In the high-priestly prayer of Jesus (John 17:5), he prays, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "In the beginning was the Word, . . . all things were made by him" (John 1:1-3). "Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6, 7). He came into this world as a man. In doing this he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. This "emptying himself" plainly implies his existence prior to his tak-

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ing the form of a servant, or "being made in the likeness of men."

These passages of scripture, and others, show the error of the Socinians, the disciples of Socinus, who died in 1604, and of the present-day Unitarians, that Jesus Christ is a mere man, and had no existence prior to his birth into this world. Arianism teaches that Christ existed before his birth, but not coeternally with the Father, yet was the first and noblest of the beings created by God. This doctrine is also opposed by several of the passages above quoted, as also by the general teachings of the Scriptures as to the nature or being of Christ, as will appear in the course of this essay.

2. *The title, Son of God.* This was appropriated by Christ and given him by his disciples, not in an accommodated sense, but manifestly in the highest import, denoting his proper deity. "Nathaniel answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel" (John 1: 49). This was in response to the discovery Christ had made to him that he had "the divine power of the Heart-searcher to look upon the soul." Dr. Schaff says: "The title, 'the Son of God,' was a

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rare designation of the Messiah, derived from Psalms 2:5, 12. (Compare Isaiah 9:6.) . . . It signifies the divine nature, as the titles, 'Son of man' and 'Son of David,' signify the human nature of the Messiah." Matthew 16:16, "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That the title is here used in its highest sense is manifest from the response of the Lord, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." No revelation from the Father would have been necessary to convince Peter that Jesus was a mere creature of God, however great or exalted. When Jesus came to the disciples, walking on the stormy waves of the sea, and the winds and the waves quieted on his being received into the boat, they said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." (See also Martha's confession, John 11:27.) When Jesus said, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work," the Jews "sought the more to kill him," because he "called God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:17, 18). When he said, "I and the Father are one," "the Jews took up stones again to stone him," as

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they said, "because that thou, being a man, maketh thyself God." In the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus a number of times appropriates the unique relation and the title, "Son of God."

3. The very name, "God," in its most august sense, is applied to Christ. Sometimes the name, "god," is applied in a subordinate or relative sense, as to Moses, to princes, judges, magistrates, because in the respect of authority or supremacy they exercise functions which, in the highest sense, are exercised by God. Notice such passages as the following: John 1:1, 14, "The Word was God . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Dr. Harris remarks: "He emphasizes this by affirming, positively, that all things were made by him, and, negatively, that without him was not anything made that has been made; that in him was life, and the life was the light of men." John 20:28, the confession of the doubting Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Romans 9:5, "Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, [here referring to his human nature,] who is over all, God blessed for ever." Although strenuous efforts have been

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made to parry the force of this passage, the word "God" is directly applied to Christ, the only view, as Dean Alford says, "admissible by the rules of grammar and arrangement." Lange's "Commentary" says that on no point where there is any room for discussion has the unanimity of commentators of all ages and confessions been so entire. Hebrews 1:8, "But of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The subject of the First Epistle of John, as announced by him, is the "Word of Life," "which we have heard, . . . seen with our eyes, . . . beheld, and our hands have handled." He closes the Epistle by saying, "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." Peter, in his second Epistle, chapter one, verse one, refers to "the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." In Titus 2:13, we read, "Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." This text seems to be a *studied* declaration of the deity of Christ.

4. The incommunicable name, "Jehovah," of the Old Testament is, in the New, ascribed to Christ. This name denotes independent, eternal,

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and immutable being. It is the specific name of the true God. Isaiah says, chapter six, verse one, "I saw also Jehovah . . . high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." John, in his Gospel, twelfth chapter, thirty-seventh to forty-first verses, quoting from the language of the Lord in this vision, says, "These things said Isaiah because he saw his [Christ's] glory; and he spake of him." (Compare, also, Joel 2:32 with Rom. 10:13; Isa. 40:3 with Matt. 3:3; Isa. 8:13, 14, and Isa. 28:16 with I. Peter 2:6-8; Zech. 12:10 with John 19:37.) The eminent Dr. Henry B. Smith also urges (1) passages in which there is an indirect use of the name of God, or in which the language implies full divinity. (See Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 1:3; John 5:18; 10:33; 19:7.) If Jesus were not God, as the Jews understood him to claim, they were right according to their law and the moral law in accusing him of blasphemy. His only replies were a defense of his language showing his right to the claims he made. (2) Passages implying Christ's entire oneness of purpose and of action with God. (John 5:19; 17:10; 5:17; 10:30.) Consider the first of these: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he

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seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." He then specifies works which only God can perform, such as raising the dead and the judgment of mankind.

5. Another class of passages is those in which Christ is called "Lord," in the supreme sense. This title is ascribed to him in the New Testament with much the same frequency and pre-eminence that God is called Lord, which is the translation for "Jehovah" in the Old Testament. He is called "Lord of lords." A few of the many instances of the use of this term in the New Testament, as applied to Christ in a sense and in connections which imply a power or dignity above such as are appropriate to a creature, are these: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." "To be present with the Lord." "Which the Lord shall give me in that day." "Them that call on the Lord." "They that in every place call on the name of the Lord." "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "The day of the Lord," the judgment day. "The Lord's day," meaning the Christian Sabbath.

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6. Such works are ascribed to Christ as only God can perform :

(1) *Creation* is ascribed to him. "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3). "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands" (Heb. 1:10). "In him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him" (Col. 1:16). This is a remarkable passage, very forcible and comprehensive. Observe the three phrases, "In him," "through him," and "for, or unto him." Johann Bengel, the eminent and pious "father of modern exegesis," said, in the eighteenth century, concerning these words, "There is here indicated beginning, progress, and end." "'In him' denotes the creative center of all things, the casual element of their existence; . . . the *conditional cause*, the act of creation being supposed to rest in him, and to depend on him for its completion and realization." "'Through him' denotes," he says, "the *causa*

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medians of creation; that is, the instrumental cause. 'For, or unto him' denotes the final cause, that for which it was created." "It was to form a portion of his glory, and to be subjected to his dominion that all things were created" (Ellicott on Colossians). Dean Alford, in his comment on these words, says, "He is the end of creation, containing the reason in himself why creation is at all, and why it is as it is." Now, in Romans 11:36, it is said of God, "For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things." Bishop Ellicott justly remarks, "If the Son had not been God, such an interchange of important relations would never have seemed possible." The argument is, God only could create the universe; Christ created the universe; Christ, therefore, is God. In Genesis 1:1, it is said, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"; in Isaiah 44:24, "I am the Lord [Jehovah] that maketh all things"; in Hebrews 3:4, "He that built all things is God"; but in John 1:3, and Colossians 1:16, these very works are ascribed to Christ. It would seem that only one legitimate conclusion is possible; namely, that Christ is God.

(2) *The upholding or continuing of all things*

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is attributed to Christ. How vast, how mighty is the universe! This earth is carefully estimated by scientists to weigh six sextillions (6,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) of tons! The planet Jupiter, though not so dense as our earth, is at least fourteen hundred times the size of this globe. Saturn is nine hundred times its size, Uranus more than eighty-five times, and Neptune almost eighty times as large, yet multitudes of the fixed stars, which themselves are suns, are hundreds of times and some of them probably thousands of times as large as our sun. There are known to be at least one hundred million of these sidereal bodies, and with every increase of the power of our telescopes new stars and even new nebulae, which are almost universes in themselves, are revealed to our astonished gaze. Jupiter is almost 500,000,000 of miles from the sun, Saturn about 900,000,000, Uranus, 1,700,000,000, and Neptune, 2,800,000,000 of miles distant from the sun. And yet Polaris, the North Star, is countless millions of times farther away from Neptune, and others are enormous stretches of inconceivable distances more remote even than Polaris. Yet, if the New Testament is to be accepted, Christ created and

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upholds these! In Hebrews 1:3, he is expressly said to be “upholding all things by the word of his power.” In Colossians 1:17, it is said, “In him all things consist.” The margin says, “Hold together.” The verb here translated “consist,” primarily means “to make stand together.” Lange’s “Commentary” says: “Without Christ all things would fall asunder. . . . The reference is to organic permanence, the continuance of the composition of the things of the world ‘in him,’ because he holds together what he has created.”

(3) *The providential government* of the world is in his hands. (Read Matt. 28:18; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; John 17:2; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3.)

(4) *Forgiveness of sins.* (Read Matt. 9:2-7; Mark 2:7-10; Col. 3:13.)

(5) *Sending the Holy Spirit.* “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth” (John 15:26). (See also John 16:7.)

(6) *The resurrection of the dead.* (Read John 5:25-29.) “The Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that

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it may be conformed to the body of his glory” (Phil. 3:20, 21).

(7) *The final judgment.* “For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22). “For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body” (II. Cor. 5:10).

7. Divine attributes are ascribed to Him:

(1) *Eternity.* (Read John 1:1; Rev. 1:8, 17, 18; Rev. 22:13; Isa. 9:6; Heb. 13:8.)

(2) *Omnipotence.* (Read Isa. 9:6; Phil. 3:21; Heb. 1:3; John 5:17; Rev. 1:8, 11, 17.)

(3) *Omnipresence.* (Heb. 1:3; Matt. 28:20; John 3:13; Matt. 18:20.)

(4) *Omniscience*, or perfect knowledge. (Matt. 11:27; John 2:23-25; John 21:17; Rev. 2:23.)

(5) *Unchangeableness.* (Heb. 1:11, 12; 13:8.) The nature of an object or being is determined by its essential attributes—matter by material attributes, spirit by spiritual attributes, a finite being by finite attributes, or the Infinite Being by infinite attributes, or the Divine Being by divine attributes. If such attributes as can belong only to the Divine Being are found to be

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ascribed to Christ, he must be divine. The attributes above enumerated are such as belong only to the Infinite or Divine Being. Hence, Christ must be a divine being.

8. The New Testament teaches that the pure intelligences of heaven worship Christ, and that men should also do so. "And I say, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped" (Rev. 5:11-14). The apostles prayed to the glorified Christ at the time of the election of Matthias to the vacant apostleship. Stephen prayed to

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Christ at the time of his martyrdom. As a reward for his humiliation and obedience even unto death, Paul says he is to receive universal homage: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). The apostolic benediction expresses a form of divine worship: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (II. Cor. 13:14). "Faith in Christ is the indispensable beginning and support of all Christian character and work, and the one indispensable condition of justification. 'In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, wherein we must be saved.' This certainly is worship to be rendered to God alone, for worship is only the expression of faith or trust in God; and here the whole Christian life and work, with all its promise, its hope, its power of renovation, rests on faith in Christ" (Dr. Harris). Now

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the decalogue expressly forbids the worship of any being but God. To bestow divine worship on any other being but God would be idolatry, which the Bible, over and over again, forbids and denounces.

In Jeremiah 17:5-7, it is said: "Thus saith the Lord: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. . . . Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." If, then, Christ is to be worshiped, he must be God. (See also Matt. 38:19; John 5:22, 23; 14:1; I. Cor. 1:2; Heb. 1:6; Luke 24:51, 52.)

9. There is a class of scripture passages which set forth Christ as the highest or first person in the universe, excepting the Father. "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father" (Matt. 11:27). "He that cometh from above is above all" (John 3:31). "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1:15). Bishop Ellicott, one of the greatest biblical expositors in Great Britain, calls this an "august passage," and

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remarks, "Christian antiquity has ever regarded the expression, 'image of God,' as denoting the eternal Son's perfect equality with the Father in respect of his substance, nature, and eternity." "The Son is the Father's image in all things save only in being the Father." The expression, "Firstborn of all creation," or, as others translate it, "before every creature," signifies "begotten," and that antecedently to everything that was *created*. Note, also: "And he is before all things" (Col. 1:17). "I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:13). How could such language be used of a man or angel or archangel? Such language as this is used in the Old Testament to set forth Jehovah, the true God. "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). "I am the first, I also am the last" (Isa. 48:12). Hebrews 1:3, reads, "Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance." The late Canon Liddon says of this: "That he is one with God as having streamed forth eternally from the Father's essence, like a ray of light from the parent fire with which it is unbrokenly joined, is implied

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in the expression, 'effulgence of his glory.' That he is both personally distinct from, and yet literally equal to him of whose essence he is the adequate imprint, is taught us in the phrase, 'very image of his substance.'"¹

10. Christ assumes such titles and such dignity as cannot belong to a man, or, indeed, to any creature, however exalted, and this teaches his deity. That is to say, he, in a great variety of expressions, claimed to be in the highest sense divine. He said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Even the great and eminent and wondrously-endowed Apostle Paul would only say, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." Christ says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me." What one even of the hierarchy of heaven could say, as Jesus did, "I am the truth"? Compare this with Mark 13:31, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." And these words, "As the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself";

¹ "Our Lord's Divinity," p. 322.

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that is, "life is resident in him in virtue of an undefined and eternal communication of it from the Father" (Liddon). Christ said: "I am the bread of life." "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." "What things soever he [the Father] doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." "I am the good shepherd." "I am the true vine." "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." "Apart from me ye can do nothing." All these are superlative claims and utterly out of place as coming from a mere man or even an angel or archangel.

Consider, also, the following language: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do." Could deity make any higher claims or more unqualified promises than these? Christ also said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "My Father

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worketh even until now, and I work." In this last expression, Christ claimed divinity in a two-fold way: First, in claiming a peculiar divine sonship; and, second, in putting his own activity into the same order as the activity of the Father, and making it of the same dignity. The whole subsequent discourse shows that Jesus meant what the Jews understood him to mean—that he claimed equality with God. Owen says: "There is not the shadow of a doubt that Jesus did here claim, and intended to claim, absolute equality with the Father." Says Dr. Stier, in his "Words of the Lord Jesus," "The Father and the Son in personal distinction, but in indivisible unity of nature, is the theme that runs through the whole of the discourse." The following claims also exceed all prerogatives of a mere creature, but are applicable to a divine being: "I am the resurrection and the life." "That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." "If God were your Father ye would love me." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What sorrow-laden heart, what sin-burdened soul, what person overwhelmed with trouble or adversity, what despairing man or

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woman, forsaken, lone, in anguish, broken of heart, that has met with these words, and has had all darkness dispelled, all anguish assuaged, the burden lifted, has ever thought to give the praise and glory of his release and relief to any but to Christ as God?

Again, Jesus said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Does he not here put himself on an equality with God, the Father, as an object of trust? "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." "I go to prepare a place for you." "I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth . . . he shall bear witness of me." Here he claims the authority and power to send the Holy Spirit, and Christ claims such supreme consequence and importance that the Holy Spirit, sent forth from the Father by Christ, shall bear witness of him. These words would be blasphemy and madness, if Christ were not divine. Still again: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Note these words: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and

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my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "We," my Father and I, "will come unto him and make *our* abode with him." He claims equal prerogative with the Father, and equal dignity. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Consider, also, this declaration of his, "He that loveth father or mother, . . . son or daughter, more than me is not worthy of me." He here demands supreme love. Dr. Charles Hodge says of this, "Such supreme love is due to God alone, and Christ, in claiming this love from us, places himself before us as God." Dr. Schaff says: "Our Lord claims here a love stronger than the dearest natural attachment, such a love and devotion as is due only to a truly divine being. This is one of those extraordinary claims which, in him, the God-man, are perfectly easy, natural, and irresistible, while in others they would be extreme madness and intolerable presumption." Let one ponder these, and similar words of Jesus Christ, and ask himself, What do they naturally teach concerning him? Is it not safe to say that they most certainly and inevitably teach, and were most certainly meant to teach, the deity of him who ut-

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tered them? This, as I have elsewhere said, is the opinion of about nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of all the able and learned expositors of the Word; it has been the opinion of the Christian church in all the ages, with only here and there a sporadic exception. One of three suppositions may be possible with respect to the being who made these extraordinary claims: First, that he was a conscious impostor; second, that he was an enthusiast and beside himself; that is, in effect, insane; or, third, that he was in reality what his words indicate he meant the world should regard him as being; namely, a divine person. The infinite God could not, and did not make more clear or definite claims to divine dignity, authority, and ability than Jesus Christ made. On the supposition that he was truly divine, the above-quoted words are all appropriate and natural; if he was not, they are not only not appropriate or natural, but are gross and intolerable arrogance; more, they are downright blasphemy. Put such language upon the lips of Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Paul, the beloved John, or even Gabriel himself, and every sober mind will be shocked, and will recoil. Some of the Roman emperors demanded

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that divine honors be paid to them, and they have been rewarded with the scorn and contempt of mankind. Nebuchadnezzar made such claims, and the Lord of heaven smote him with a species of madness that drove him into the pastures, where, for seven years, he fed with the cattle upon grass, under the delusion that he himself was an ox. The first and second of the above suppositions are precluded by the perfect moral character, the wisdom, sobriety, calmness, and consistency of Christ's conduct and teachings. There remains for us the conclusion that he was what he claimed to be—the Son of God, or God in the Son.

V. GOD IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

God is presented to us in the Scriptures in still another, a third mode of being—that of the Holy Spirit.

1. Let us notice some of the names given to him:

(1) He is called God. In Acts 5:3, 4, "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Here God and the Holy Ghost are identified. In II. Timothy

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3: 16, it is said, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," etc. In II. Peter 1: 21, we read, "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." The "organs of revelation," who have given us the Scriptures, in one case, are said to be inspired by God; in the other, the writers are said to have been moved by the Holy Ghost, showing that one and the same being are denoted by "God" and the "Holy Ghost." In I. Corinthians 3: 16, the Apostle Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" A temple of God is a sanctuary in which God dwells and manifests himself, but it is immediately subjoined, that "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you," the two forms of expression again designating the same being; that is, in all these passages the Holy Ghost is called God.

(2) He is identified with the "Jehovah" of the Old Testament. In the great vision described in Isaiah 6, when the prophet saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, he was greatly agitated, and said, "Woe is me! . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." In

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Acts 28: 25, the Holy Ghost is identified with this Jehovah of hosts—"Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah," etc. A comparison of Jeremiah 31: 31-34, with Hebrews 10: 15-17, furnishes another example of a like kind.

2. Divine perfections are also ascribed to him, such as omnipresence (Ps. 139: 7-10; Rom. 8: 26, 27); omniscience, or all knowledge (Isa. 40: 13, 14; I. Cor. 2: 10, 11); omnipotence, or all power, and eternity.

3. Divine works are ascribed to him, such as creation (Gen. 1: 2; Job 26: 13; 33: 4); regeneration (John 3: 5, 6; Titus 3: 5); the power of miracles (I. Cor. 12: 9-11); the resurrection of the dead (I. Pet. 3: 18; Rom. 8: 11).

4. Divine worship is paid to him. (Compare Isa. 6: 3-9, with Acts 18: 25; Rom. 9: 1; II. Cor. 13: 14.)

5. Both his distinct personality and his divine nature are exhibited by the way in which the divine and personal qualities of intelligence, volition, and distinct agency are ascribed to him. He has knowledge, for he "searcheth the deep things of God." "Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God." He testifies of

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Christ: "He shall testify of me," said Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to his disciples. He is sent; he goes; he teaches, guides, and comforts. He reproves, glorifies, intercedes—"The Spirit himself maketh intercession." At the time of the baptism of Jesus, when John and Jesus came up out of the Jordan, the Father spake in audible voice, "This is my beloved Son, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him." It is also said that the "Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit." In regard to the diversity of spiritual endowments, it is said, "But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will." From all these considerations of divine names given him, divine attributes assigned him, divine works ascribed to him, divine worship accorded to him, and these personal properties and acts attributed to him, the conclusion seems inevitable that he is a divine, personal being, just as much so as Christ or the Father, or, that God was in the Spirit. There are, of course, passages of scripture in

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which God is said to be spirit, or is called the Spirit of God, without explicit reference to the threefold distinction, as when Christ says, "God is a Spirit." But these do not contradict the passages quoted and referred to above, in which the distinction is certainly made.

VI. GOD THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

Thus far, the effort has been made to find what the scriptural representations are with respect to God, in the manner in which the revelations were made to men. These representations or elements are now to be brought together to discover their relations and bring them into a unity, for only thus shall we have the whole truth. As in a natural science, the different classes of facts must be brought together to discover their relations and combine them into a unity, which alone gives true knowledge, so we are compelled to do with respect to the facts revealed in Scripture. The human mind cannot rest satisfied with the mere accumulation of facts or truths. One set or class of truths modify and explain another set of truths, and it is only when these are properly subordi-

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nated and systematized that we can be sure we have the real truth.

Surveying what we have thus far discovered concerning the Scripture representations of God, we find the following elements are thus to be combined: "First, the oneness and onliness of God. Second, the three eternal distinctions or modes of being of the one only God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Third, the proper deity of each of the three; that is, God the one indivisible absolute spirit in each of these peculiar and eternal modes of being" (Harris).

First of all, the doctrine that there is only one God is to be held fast with strict firmness. There are not *three* Gods, though the numerous scripture passages quoted do set before us that the Father is God, that Christ is God, and that the Holy Ghost is God. The opponents of the doctrine of the Trinity tell us this gives us three gods; but substantially the whole church, in all her forms and divisions, namely, the Roman Catholic, the Greek, and the Protestant, has held as emphatically as the Unitarians to the doctrine of only one God. Our United Brethren creed says, "We believe in the only true God, the Father, the Son,

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and the Holy Ghost; that these three are one." So the Westminster Catechism says these three "are one true eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." The Athanasian creed, accepted by Catholics and Protestants alike, says, "There are not three gods, but one God." So innumerable theologians and biblical scholars have taught. The great creeds which have been the platform upon which the three great divisions of the church have always stood;—namely, the Nicene Creed, of A. D. 325, the creed formed at Constantinople in 381, and the Athanasian, of the eighth century,—make this very emphatic. By this they mean that there is no divisibility of the divine substance, that the numerically one and same substance or essence belongs to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. The Unitarians explain this phenomenon by saying that God is, in an absolute sense, one; that there is no distinction to be made in the Godhead at all; that when God acts in one relation to the universe or to man, he is called Father, when he acts in another relation, say as redeemer, he is called the Son, and when he acts in the relation of sanctifier, guide, or comforter, he is called the Holy Spirit. This is

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called the economic Trinity. But the Bible teaches more than this; namely, that there is a distinction in the Godhead itself, corresponding to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There is, then, in the biblical conception of God not only the idea of oneness and onliness, but also the idea of threeness. The one God, indivisible in his substance or essence, exists in three modes of being, expressed by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word by which at once this unity and these distinctions are sought to be expressed is the word "Trinity," which means triunity. The three modes or distinctions in the being of God may be, and have been variously named "personalities," "individualities," "hypostases," or "subsistences." Very generally they have been spoken of as "persons." "God is not three in the same sense in which he is one." The threeness here spoken of is necessary to his oneness or unity. There are not three different beings constituting one being, as three men constitute a committee. The committee is one, a unit, though composed of three different men. God is numerically one as to being and essence, subsisting as three persons. Says Dr. Townsend: "If either one of the personalities is

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omitted from the Godhead, there can be no God. The Father, without both the Logos (the Word or Son) and the Spirit, would not be God. The Logos, without both the Father and the Spirit, would not be God. The Spirit, without both the Father and the Logos, would not be God." "These three personalities, according to the Bible, are of such a character that they do not in the least contradict the eternal unity of the Godhead."

Before proceeding to define the term "person," let us turn once more to the Scripture to see whether the three representations of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are used in such relations to one another as to suggest at once this oneness and threeness, bearing all the while in mind the direct and express declarations of Scripture of the "oneness" and "onliness" of God. The term, "Trinity," does not occur in the Bible, but has been in use among Christians from the second century of our Lord. Neither does the word "person" occur as applied to these distinctions in the Godhead.

1. The baptismal formula, in the last command of our Lord, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

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Ghost." Jesus does not say "into the *names*," plural, but "into the *name*," singular, pointing us to a single Being. Dr. Stier says, "The three persons of the one divine nature stand here together; their unity is held fast and witnessed by the *name*, not *names*."¹ Professor Christlieb says, "The singular term, *in the name*, indicates that these persons are yet essentially one; not three different beings or separate individuals."² On the other hand, three persons seem to be as clearly implied. No one doubts that the Father is a person. "The Son" must also be a person, for no impersonal being or thing would be called "the Son." Here are at least two persons. "Holy Ghost" must be a person or an influence or a power or an attribute. The most natural and reasonable conclusion is, that if the first two terms denote persons, the third does, also. Otherwise, we should have the absurdity of baptizing a subject into the name of two *persons* and of a *thing*, an influence, or power, putting these all into the same relation to the person baptized. How absurd would the command be to baptize all nations into the name of God and of Paul and of the power or the goodness of God!

¹ "Words of the Lord Jesus," in Matt. 29:19.

² "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," p. 254.

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2. Consider the apostolic benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Jesus Christ was surely a person; God was also a person. Supposing the Lord Jesus Christ to be a mere man, or even a more exalted creature, and the Holy Ghost a mere attribute or influence, what a jumble we have here. Then Paul prays that the love of God, the Divine One, and the favor of Christ, a man or some other creature, and the fellowship of a mere impersonal attribute or influence may be with these Corinthian Christians. This is unintelligible. But if they are all coequal divine persons, the language is perfectly clear and intelligible. Albert Barnes says, "This passage furnishes proof of the doctrine of the Trinity that has not yet been answered, and it is believed cannot be."

3. "*I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.*" Here Christ, the Son, prays the Father that he will send *another Comforter* in place of Christ, soon to leave his disciples. Who this Comforter is appears from the context, "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not,

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neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you." The Comforter, then, is the Spirit, whom the Father would give to the disciples, whom they could know, and who should dwell in them. This Spirit must, therefore, be a person distinct from Christ and from the Father. The word is *distinct*, not *separate*, from the Father and the Son.

4. "For through *him* [Christ] we both have access in one *Spirit* unto the *Father*" (Eph. 2: 18). Bishop Ellicott, one of the most discreet and able of expositors, says, "The mention of the three persons in the blessed Trinity, with the three prepositions, *through*, *in*, *unto*, is especially noticeable and distinct." Dr. Pope holds, "This great word is the key to the general strain of the Epistles, and if pursued into its consequences, is sufficient to establish the divinity of each person."

Now, what is a person? In popular usage, a person is a human being. Calderwood, in his "Moral Philosophy," defines person as "a self-conscious intelligence, capable of self-determination." John Locke, the great English philosopher, says, "A person is a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can con-

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sider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and different places." Boethius defines person as "the indivisible substance of a rational nature." These are philosophical definitions, and it is not exactly in any of these senses that the word "person" is used with respect to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as distinct from one another. In the sense of Boethius, the term "person" is applicable only to Godhead as such; that is, in his sense, there cannot be three persons in the Godhead, but one only. The term, "person," it should be noted, is not to be taken in the sense of attribute, nor as a mere manifestation. It is used in a technical, theological sense. It does not strictly fit to the facts, and yet appears to be the best term in human language to embody the conception we are seeking to express. Professor Shedd says: "It [person] is intermediate between substance and attributes. It is not identical with substance, for there are not three substances. It is not identical with attribute, for the three persons each and equally possess all the divine attributes. Hence the human mind is called upon to grasp the notion of a species of existence that is totally *sui generis* [of its own

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kind], and not capable of illustration by any of the ordinary comparisons and illustrations.”¹ Dr. Philip Schaff speaks of the word “person” as “a mere makeshift, in the absence of a more adequate term.”

The truth seems to be that our conception of God is deeper and truer than we have language to express, or, as Schaff says, “the essence and character of God far transcend our highest ideas.” Dr. Charles Hodge, one of the clearest of thinkers, says, “A person is an intelligent subject, who can say, I, who can be addressed as thou, and who can act and be the object of action.” In this sense, each of the three modes of existence in the Godhead is a person. The Father is represented in Scripture as saying of himself, “I,” he is addressed as “thou,” and is spoken of as “he.” So of the Son, the three personal pronouns, “I,” “thou,” “he,” are legitimate and essential. It is just as true that the same forms of personal expression, “I,” “thou,” “he,” are legitimately and essentially applied to the Holy Spirit.

Ever since the days of the great Augustine (A. D. 430), the human mind has been taken as

¹ “History of Christian Doctrine,” Vol. 1., p. 365.

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probably the best created object with which to illustrate the fact of the Trinity, as far as any created object may illustrate it. The recent forms of the illustration differ from his, and are more abstruse, but are by many thought to serve the purpose better. The illustration is taken from self-consciousness. In every act of knowledge there are three factors. When I take knowledge of an apple, for instance, the first factor is my mind, or I; the second is the apple; the third is the connection or relation between the I and the apple, which is called *knowledge*. In self-consciousness, or self-knowledge, there are likewise three factors: First, the I knowing; second, the I known; the third, again, the connection or relation between the first I and the second I. That is, I seem to stand off to look at myself. I make *myself* the object of inspection. The I knowing is the same identically as the I known, and there is, thirdly, that mysterious third thing, the personal recognition. Dr. Dorner says, "Actual spirit is itself this mediation" between the thinker and the thought. Now, it is held by many of the latest and profoundest writers that the phenomenon of our own self-consciousness may help us to rise

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at least a single step toward the comprehension of the Trinity. The Father is represented by the subject, or first I; the Son is represented by the object, or second I; and the Holy Spirit is represented by the third element, the connecting link, or the "mediation." According to our common notion, a person is a human being. Every sane person possesses self-consciousness or self-knowledge, in which these three elements or factors above referred to are present. Self-consciousness is essential to personality. If there were no I to think, there would be no person; if this I could not contemplate itself, there could be no self-consciousness; and if there were not the bond by which the first I and the second I were known to be the same, there would be no self-consciousness. These three elements are hence necessary to personality. A horse or a dog is not called a person, because he has no self-consciousness. Such deep and famous writers as Dorner, Christlieb, Delitzsch, and Müller, of Europe, and Shedd and Gerhart, in this country, therefore, hold, if there were not in the Godhead, in a modified sense, some such threefold elements, there could be no personal God at all. That is, deny the idea of the

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Trinity, and you rob yourself of the idea of a self-conscious, that is, a personal God. Of course, this illustration is imperfect, as all illustrations on this subject must be. The making myself the object of contemplation is only a mental act, whereas in God "*perfect* self-knowledge is possible," says Dr. Dorner, "inasmuch as he really transfuses himself into his image." Now look in the Revised Version at Hebrews 1:3; referring to the Son, the writer says, "Who being the effulgence of his [God's] glory, and the *very image* of his *substance*." Lack of space forbids my giving another illustration from the mental constitution of man, which consists of intellect, sensibility, and will. Any who may wish to see an excellent presentation of it are referred to Dr. Harris's "God Creator and Lord of All," Vol. 1, pp. 334, 335. This doctrine of three persons in the Godhead may be called the "essential" or the "immanent Trinity."

VII. PERSONAL PROPERTIES OF THE THREE PERSONS.

It has been shown that there is but one divine spiritual substance belonging equally to each of

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the three persons; also, that all the divine attributes belong equally to each of the three persons; also, that all the divine attributes belong equally to each. Yet these three are not in every respect the same, each as the other. They are distinguished by certain "properties." There belongs to each of the three persons a characteristic individuality, or peculiarity, called in Greek *idiotes*, or "property," which is his own exclusively, and cannot be transferred from one to another. To the first person belongs the property of paternity, or fatherhood, himself unbegotten, but begetting the Son; to the Son belongs the filial property of being begotten; to the Holy Spirit belongs the property of procession—he proceeds from the Father and the Son. Jesus said, "Even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father." The "properties," as they are called, are not attributes. Attributes are inherent in the divine essence which is common to all the "persons." "Property" pertains not to the essence or substance of the Divine Being, but is peculiar to each "person." Dr. Charles Hodge puts it thus: "Notwithstanding that the Father, Son, and Spirit are the same in substance, and equal in

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power and glory, it is no less true, according to the Scriptures, (1) that the Father is first, the Son second, and the Spirit third; (2) the Son is of the Father, and the Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; (3) the Father sends the Son, and the Father and Son send the Spirit; (4) the Father operates through the Son, and the Father and Son operate through the Spirit." The "begetting" and the "proceeding" are not acts done in time and once for all, but are to be regarded as eternal facts or relations. "These relations are not such," says Delitzsch, "that the Son could at any time be so begotten of the Father as that he should be begotten of him no more; nor that the Spirit should at any time have proceeded from both, so as that he should proceed no more; but these are everlasting facts, which, if eternity be conceived as a duration without a beginning or end, are apprehended as in enduring *becoming*," and yet in a sense completed. These relations are clearly enough taught by the Scriptures, and have been, in the main, held and taught as doctrines by the church ever since A. D. 325; but as to their nature, it is admitted to be incomprehen-

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sible. Yet this is nothing against receiving them, provided no palpable contradiction is involved. The Bible teaches that God is an infinite, omnipresent, personal spirit, which is absolutely incomprehensible to finite minds, but yet is universally received by theists.

VIII. TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

It has been noticed by the attentive reader that nearly all the Scripture quotations in this discussion, excepting on the oneness of God and a few on God as Father, have been taken from the New Testament. Is this doctrine of the Trinity not taught by the Old Testament? Yes, but not with such distinctness and emphasis as in the New. All the doctrines of revelation are probably in the Old Testament, but some of them in germ, or in an undeveloped form. There was an evolution in revelation, a slow and gradual unfolding of the truths made known, little by little. No one doctrine is all at once and once for all presented to the world. The history of the race is analogous to that of an individual person; it has its successive periods of infancy, childhood, youth, man-

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hood. As in literature, art, philosophy, science, civilization, so in religion, even the true religion, there has been growth or development from small, germlike beginnings, which received additions or were unfolded as the ages passed. Two and a half centuries ago, Calixtus, the distinguished Lutheran professor at Helmstadt, timidly asked whether the doctrine of the Trinity could be proved from the Old Testament alone. The *emphasis* in the Old Testament is laid on the *unity* or “onliness” of God,—in the law, in the ritual, and even in prophecy,—because the tendency of man estranged from God has ever been toward polytheism and idolatry. With all the stringent measures against these sins, the chosen people could hardly be restrained. Van Oosterzee truly says, “The Israelitish monotheism would probably have suffered more loss than it would have derived benefit from the untimely disclosure of this truth.” Professor Christlieb thinks God “gave at least manifold hints of it in the names and words and facts of the ancient Scriptures.” Dr. Gerhart holds that the “Old Testament unity foreshadows New Testament triunity.” The order of revelation was, first, the unity or onliness of God, or

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God in the Father; this in the Old Testament, particularly. Second, God in Christ in the Gospels, the Epistles being expansions and explanations of the teachings or truths in the Gospels. Third, God in the Holy Spirit, in the Book of Acts and the Epistles.

1. It was once much the fashion to find proof of the Trinity in the plural names and titles of God in the Hebrew Scriptures—*Elohim* for God, *Adonai* for Lord, *El Shaddai* for God Almighty. So in the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes 12:1, it is, "Remember now thy Creators"; Proverbs 9:10, "The knowledge of the Holy Ones is understanding"; Proverbs 30:3, "Knowledge of the Holy Ones"; Isaiah 54:5, "Thy makers (are) thy husbands." Not nearly so much stress is laid on these plural forms now, because they have come to be regarded as instances of what the Hebrew grammars call the "plural of majesty," to suggest "the idea of exaltation or greatness," somewhat as we speak of the *waters* of the Pacific Ocean, this being more expressive than the singular form.

In Genesis 1:26, God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," and in Genesis 3:22, "Behold, the man is become as one of us."

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These may also be taken as idiomatic peculiarities, and yet the great Hebrew scholar, Professor Delitzsch, thinks that "God, speaking . . . with reference to the fullness of the divine powers and essences which he possesses," is to be understood as intimating "the truth which lies at the foundation of the trinitarian view." Dr. Gerhart puts it cautiously, thus, "That the primary forms of supernatural revelation and of human apprehension contain features which, though indistinct, even unintelligible to the people of God during pre-Christian ages of their history, are nevertheless typical of the constitution of the Godhead as revealed in Jesus Christ."

2. The high-priestly benediction in Numbers 6: 24-27, is appealed to, "Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee; Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

3. The *trisagion*, as it is called, in Isaiah 6: 3, where the seraphim call out, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts," is also by many quoted as pointing in the same direction.

4. Other passages are quoted as containing like intimations; for example: (1) Those in

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which God is distinguished from God, as subject and object. "Jehovah rained brimstone and fire from Jehovah." "O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, for the Lord's sake." (2) Those in which three persons may be hinted at. (Isa. 48:16.) (3) The passages on the angel of Jehovah. The angel of Jehovah is identified with Jehovah and with God, and accepts worship due only to deity. (See Genesis 22:11, 16; 31:11, 13; and especially Exodus 3:2-18.) But serious objections may be offered against all of these passages taken singly. (4) Old Testament passages in which divine names and works are ascribed to the Messiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father [that is, as in Hebrew, the Father of Eternity], Prince of Peace." This is undoubtedly a Messianic passage. The Messiah was the anointed of God, sent of God, yet the "Mighty God, Father of Eternity," etc. Psalms 45:6, 7: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. . . . Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee." (See also Micah 5:2, and Malachi 3:1.) In these, and like

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passages, the Messiah is represented as one with Jehovah, or God, and yet, in some sense, distinct from him. Many expositors refer us, also, to Genesis 1:1-3. *God* creates (v. 1); the *Spirit* of God is brooding over the abyss (v. 2); the *Word* of God creates light, "And God *said*, Let there be light." Gerhart says of this, "Certainly there are no *personal* distinctions expressed by this sublime language, but we may discern in it just that faint manifestation of triune energy which the idea of an objective historical revelation presupposes." The very cautious Dr. Knapp says, "It appears that no one of the passages cited from the Old Testament in proof of the Trinity is conclusive, when taken by itself; but . . . when they are all taken together, they convey the impression that at least a plurality in the Godhead was obscurely indicated in the Jewish Scriptures."¹

IX. "COLLATERAL SUPPORTS."

While it is impossible, in a brief compass, to bring together all the biblical material bearing on this question, enough, it is believed, has been given to show that the Bible does represent the

¹ "Christian Theology," p. 133.

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one God as existing in a triunity—one being in three hypostases, or persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But, in addition, there is outside of the Bible a considerable number of what Professor Christlieb calls “collateral supports,” which, while they do not rank as positive proofs,—for these are to be looked for only in the Bible,—may yet, perhaps, not inappropriately be called corroborative proofs.

1. The trinitarian conception, in some form, is common to almost all religions and mythologies. Hence, Christlieb says, “A trinity of deities is common to all nations.” James Freeman Clarke, in his “Ten Great Religions,”—and he is a Unitarian writer,—speaks of the “triads in all religions.” I subjoin some quotations from his great work. In the Hindu religion it is Para-Brahm, Siva, and Vishnu. “This is the Hindu Trinity—the Trimurti. Its holy, inexpressible name is the sacred triliteral word A U M.”

“A series of triad deities were also worshiped in Assyria, and another in Babylon. In Assyria, the highest triad was: (1) Oannes, Chaos; (2) Bel, he who gives form to Chaos; (3) A O or Bin, the Son, representing the world as formed.”

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“The object of worship in Buddhism is also a triad, consisting of: (1) Buddha, the Supreme Being; (2) Dharma, the law; and (3) Sangha, the associated priesthood.”

“In Egypt, the gods were all grouped in triads, and a separate triad was worshiped in each city; at Thebes, Amun, Maut, and Khons; at Memphis, Ptah, Pasht, and their son; elsewhere, Osiris, Isis, Horus.”

In speaking of one of the ancient Chinese religions, Dr. Clarke remarks: “Another passage says: ‘These inscrutable three are but one.’ ‘The Tao produced one, one produced two; the two produced three, the three produced all things.’”

“Plato held that God is threefold: first, as the profound, inscrutable substance and cause of all things; next, as manifesting himself in the ideas, which are the roots in the spiritual world of all that exists in the natural world; and, thirdly, as the life of the universe.”

“Not only Plato, but other Greek philosophers before him, . . . conceived of the Supreme Being as a triad in a monad.” “The system of Zoroaster . . . finally assumed a triad form.” “Even the Jewish mind, when it began to philos-

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ophize in Alexandria, took up the conception of the Deity as an imperfect triad. This was especially the work of Philo." "The Gnostics also held to a triad." Professor Christlieb tells us, in "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," "In the Celtic, Germanic, and Slavic mythology, we find the same idea of a divine Trinity; amongst the Irish (Kriosan, Biosena, Siva), Scandinavians (Thor, Woden, Friceo), the ancient Prussians (Petrimpos, Perkunos, Pikullos), the Pomeranians and the Wends, whose god was named Triglav, that is, the three-headed." "The ancient Americans worshiped the sun under three images, which they called Father, Son, Brother Son. One of their great idols was called Tangalanga; that is, One in Three and Three in One. The reader can pursue this subject further in the works of Dr. Clarke, Professor Christlieb, Dr. Townsend, and Knapp's "Christian Theology."

It is remarkable that these trinitarian or triadic conceptions pervade the theology of almost all nations. The philosopher Schelling held that "the philosophy of mythology proves that a trinity of divine potentialities is the root from which have

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grown the religious ideas of all nations of any importance known to us."

The *idea* of the Trinity was held in the Christian church substantially from the beginning, and in express formulæ from the time of the Council of Nice, A. D. 325. Hagenbach, in his "History of Doctrine," tells us, "The belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost belonged to the *regula fidei* (rule of faith) in the primitive church." I elsewhere have collated more than sixty of the acknowledged historic names of eminent thinkers from Anselm on who stood for this doctrine. The list might have been indefinitely increased; I chose only real leaders of thought.

2. Speculative theology and philosophy give large support to the truth and necessity of the doctrine of the Trinity. Reference need only be made to the more recent theological writings of Nitzsch, Dorner, Delitzsch, Martensen, Gerhart, and Shedd. Dr. Clarke's references to Plato, Parmenides, Pythagoras, the Neoplatonists, and Philo, have already been cited. Add to these the Christian philosophers, Athenagoras, Hippolytus, Athanasius, Augustine, Roscellinus, Anselm, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Eckhart, Cusanus, the

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pantheist Spinoza, Leibnitz, Lessing, Schelling, Baader, and Hegel. Why is it that this trinitarian idea has commended itself to most of the profoundest thinkers of our race, outside the pale of the church as well as within it? None but a consummate *egotist* can sneer at it.

3. Students have found many trinitarian analogies or hints in nature. Dr. Townsend shows that a view of the physical universe under so skillful and experienced an eye as that of Professor Huxley, exhibits to us, first, "unity of substantial composition," that is, matter; second, "unity of power," that is, force; and, third, "unity of form," that is, law, giving us the trinitarian formula: "Unity of substantial composition, unity of power, and unity of form." These three constitute the universe. Nothing need be said of the existence of matter. We are sufficiently familiar with that. The Duke of Argyle, some years ago, wrote a very able book, entitled "The Reign of Law." Fichte, "one of the profoundest speculative minds Germany ever produced, affirms that this 'law of the universe' is God." But there is also power everywhere. Thomas Carlyle exclaims: "Force, force, everywhere force! Illimitable whirlwind of force

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which envelops us; everlasting whirlwind, high as immensity, old as eternity—what is it?” Carlyle answers, “It is Almighty God.” Thus we have given matter, law, force, which equals the universe.

Now we may take some objects in nature, for example, the plant: It consists of three parts—root, stalk, leaves. The tree consists of root, trunk, and leaves. But, still further, the tree consists of matter and force or life, which builds the tree, and law, according to which the tree is built. The heavenly bodies consist of *matter*; they are propelled by an almighty *force*, and always according to the most precise and rigid *laws*. In every ray of light there are three elements: The light ray, —luminosity,—the heat ray, and the actinic ray, which is the chemical force of the ray, and is distinct but not separate from the light and heat. Man, especially made in the image of God, is pointed to as a manifestation of this trinality in nature. He consists, according to the Pauline trichotomy, of body, soul, and spirit. Physically, he consists of head, trunk, and limbs. The Frenchman Delsarte, studying the human body solely for elocutionary purposes, found the whole

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body written over with "trinitarian symbols," the head region, the heart region, and the abdominal region corresponding respectively with the intellect, the affections, and the passions. But there are found the same triadic characteristics in the head, in the face, and in other parts of the body. Take the arm; it consists of upper arm, forearm, and hand. The hand consists of wrist, metacarpus, or middle hand, and phalanges, or fingers. The lower limb consists of thigh, leg, and foot. The arm proper has three bones, the humerus, the ulna, and the radius; the lower limb, or leg proper, also has three, the femur, the tibia, and the fibula. The trunk consists of chest, abdomen, and pelvis.

The mind of man furnishes another analogon. Psychologists generally make here a threefold division into intellect, sensibility, and will. "The soul is a trinal unity." Dr. Harris takes this as the best illustration of the divine triunity. Dr. Gerhart goes still further with this trinal analogy in the mind. Three things enter into the nature of *freedom*: "(1) Law . . . the *categorical imperative*; (2) self-determination or choice; (3) the union of the ethical subject with the ethi-

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cal object.” “Objective knowledge is likewise trinal: (a) The knowing subject; (b) the known object; (c) the union of the knowing subject with the knowable object.” The trinal nature of self-consciousness has been spoken of in an earlier part of this essay. Professors Fulton and Trueblood, in their “Practical Elocution,” find three elements in man’s psychic being; namely, vital, mental, and emotive, which division they find it philosophical to carry into every division of their work.

If now we pass into logic, and examine the process of reasoning, we meet with trinality again. The syllogism consists of three propositions and has three terms. The logical concept has three distinctions,—contents, extensions, and their reciprocal connection. Even every concept is either general, particular, or singular. In grammar every sentence consists of subject, copula, and predicate.

The point in referring to these analogies is this: The universe is the embodiment of the Creator’s ideas; in a sense, it “bodies forth the constitution of the Creator.” This is so much the case, and so apparent, that many minds have declared that the universe is God and God is the universe. These

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trinitarian or triadic features of the universe give hint of, and correspond to the triune nature of God. We would seem, then, in the Scriptures to have an authoritative setting forth of, and in physical nature, in mind, in philosophy, in comparative religion, in history, a corroborative testimony to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

X. THE PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

It may be profitable to give a brief consideration to the practical relations and value of this doctrine:

1. It affects the very conception of the nature and being of God. The conceptions of God, as held respectively by the trinitarian and the anti-trinitarian are not the same. If God has been revealed as a triune God, subsisting as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then the Unitarian conception of God must be a radical error. Says Dr. Dorner, "Only he truly thinks the personal God who does not deny the triune God." A Christian cannot be indifferent as to whether his ideas of God, as far as he is able to comprehend him, are true or not. It is necessary to a correct system of doc-

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trine that one's knowledge of God be at least approximately true.

2. A denial of the doctrine of the Trinity as a matter of theory and of fact, involves the denial of the doctrine of the atonement, or, at most, allows only a moral effect to the death of Christ. Unitarianism, deism, and rationalism deny the vicarious nature of Christ's death. They reject the doctrine of propitiation.

3. As a consequence, the antitrinitarian theology has also a feeble theory as to the nature and turpitude of sin. Sin is not so heinous a thing, after all, and did not require the death of the God-man to atone for it. Christ was not a ransom for sin; he did not expiate our guilt.

4. This reacts upon the conception of the moral character of God—lowers the biblical teaching as to God's holiness. The darkness of the biblical representation of sin brings out by contrast into clear prominence the holiness of God.

5. The denial of the Trinity diminishes the degree of Christ's humiliation. If he was only a man, he did no more than many another martyr has done. But if Christ really was "on an equality with God," in coming into this world, he also

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really "emptied himself . . . humbled himself."

6. The antitrinitarian view also lowers the conception of God's love for our race. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." But if Christ was only a man, or a creature, his humiliation and death could be no such affecting exhibition of God's love as if he were his eternal, "well-beloved Son."

7. All this involves wrong notions, also, of justification, regeneration, sanctification, etc. The views of Unitarians on these subjects are wholly unlike those of the orthodox churches. As a matter of fact, they are found to deny these doctrines, and also the proper inspiration of the Scriptures.

8. Dr. Harris says truly, "Christ presents the Trinity as central in the organization, worship, doctrine, and work of his church." Christ says, "Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But this is the Trinity. "It is the central reality on which the church is organized. Baptism is the sacrament of admission to the Christian church. In all ages and nations, whoever enters it is to see

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the triune name emblazoned over its gateway, and in being admitted . . . is to be baptized into the one name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."



9. "The Trinity, as revealed in Christ, is of vital moment in the practical experience and work of the Christian life." Christ is the "Light of the world," the "Door," the "Good Shepherd." He is to forgive our sins, to be our intercessor. In him we are to trust, through him to be reconciled. To him and in his name we are to pray; that is, we are to worship him. Deny his divinity, what becomes of all this? The Holy Spirit is to regenerate and sanctify and guide and comfort and instruct us. But if he is only an attribute or influence, then what? "The denial of the Trinity changes the conception of the essential character of the right moral life. It sunders morality from religion, emphasizes man's natural ability, his work of righteousness."

10. I subjoin a few opinions of eminent writers: Dr. Townsend, "The doctrine of the Trinity is vital to the whole system." Dr. Knapp, "Intimately connected with the whole exhibition of Christian truth." Dr. Schaff, "The very center

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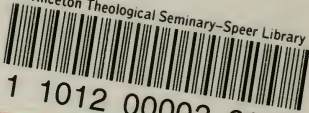
of the Christian revelation." Van Oosterzee, "The bulwark of Christian theism." Christlieb, "No true theism without the Trinity." Neander, "Forms the basis of the true unity of the church and the identity of the Christian consciousness in all ages." Charles Kingsley: "My heart demands the Trinity as much as my reason. I say, boldly, if the doctrine of the Trinity is not in the Bible, it ought to be."

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